



Catherine the Great, 1729–1796

Appears on the *Bowl*
Labeled beneath portrait: CATHERINE II.

Yevgraf Chemesov (Russian, 1737–1765),
after Pietro Antonio Rotary (Italian, 1707–1762),
Catherine the Great, 1761. Engraving

Catherine the Great, generally credited with modernizing Russia, came to power in a stunning and unexpected coup. Catherine was plucked from a minor German family to marry the Russian imperial heir Peter III, with whom she soon found herself both personally and politically incompatible. Only six months after her husband’s ascendancy to power in 1762, Catherine claimed the throne for herself, leading to his abdication and mysterious death days later. As a ruler, Catherine was deeply invested in making Russia a formidable global power.

She oversaw a mission of expansion, drawing Russian borders westward, into Crimea and what was then the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. She also helped to establish Russia as a hub of cultural and intellectual growth. She corresponded with leading enlightenment thinkers like Voltaire and Diderot, inviting the latter to work at her court. Catherine is remembered as a fierce and confident ruler who irrevocably transformed Russia into a powerful player in European politics.



Blanche of Castile, 1188–1252

Appears on the *Bowl*
Labeled beneath portrait: BLANCHE DE CASTILLE

Thomas Trotter (English, c. 1750–1803),
after de Bie (nationality and life dates unknown),
Blanche of Castile, late 18th century. Stipple engraving.
National Portrait Gallery, London, D23652

Blanche of Castile is the earliest person depicted on this service. Blanche was raised in Castile, a kingdom in what is today Spain. At the age of twelve, she entered French nobility through marriage to Louis VIII. During the twenty-six years of their marriage, Blanche gave birth to five children, of whom, two—Isabel of France and Louis IX—would eventually become venerated as saints. Louis IX, her eldest son, also known as Saint Louis, was still a child when his father passed away,

necessitating Blanche’s heavy involvement in her son’s early reign. Blanche coordinated a successful defense of France from encroaching English forces in a conflict waged between 1242 and 1243 known as the Saintonge War. Even after her son became an adult, Blanche remained deeply involved in matters of state, dying as queen regent while her son participated in the Seventh Crusade.



Maria Theresa of Austria, 1717–1780

Appears on the *Bowl*
Labeled beneath portrait: MARIE THÉRÈSE.

Jakob Schmutzer (Austrian, 1733–1811),
after Joseph Ducreux III (French, 1737–1802),
Maria Theresa of Austria, 1770. Engraving.
British Museum, 1871,1209.630

As ruler of much of Eastern Europe, Empress Maria Theresa held a pivotal political position in the eighteenth century. Maria Theresa was not raised to be a leader, but she took to the role with vigor—although she was technically co-ruler with her husband, Francis I, by force of personality, Maria Theresa held the power. During her reign, Maria Theresa protected the borders of Austria from attacks by Prussia, organizing and strengthening an army that was in shambles at the time of her ascension.

Impressively, Maria Theresa also gave birth to sixteen children while managing her empire. She was recorded to have said that were she not always pregnant, she would have gone out and fought on the battlefield herself. She was as shrewd a mother as she was a military commander, using her many children to establish and cement political connections across Europe. Famously, her youngest daughter Maria Antonia married the future Louis XVI of France in 1770, becoming Marie Antoinette.



Joan of Arc, c. 1412–1431

Appears on the *Milk Jug*
Labeled beneath portrait: JEANNE D’ARC.

Antoine de Marcenay de Ghuy (French, born 1722/1724–1811),
Joan of Arc, 1769. Engraving. British Museum, 1840,0314.69

Joan of Arc differs significantly from many of the women depicted in this tea service. Joan was not born to nobility, and she occupied a cultural role much closer to legend than historical figure. Joan of Arc was born near the end of the Hundred Years’ War, a long conflict between France and England. At the age of thirteen, she experienced a vision in which a group of saints instructed her to drive the English out of France. Joan convinced many people of her holy mission and, four years later, managed

to gain an audience with the French king at the royal court in Chinon. From that point on, Joan was valued as a strategist and a symbol of the French right to rule. She was captured by the English in 1430 and was executed as a heretic in 1431. Later canonized as a saint in the Catholic church and recognized as a martyr, Joan’s potency as a military figure made her one of Europe’s most recognizable symbols of female power.



Anne of Austria, 1601–1666

Appears on the *Teapot*
Labeled beneath portrait: Anne d'Autriche.

Jeremias Falck (Polish, c. 1609–1677),
after Justus van Egmont (Flemish, 1601–1674),
Anne of Austria, 1643. Engraving

Anne of Austria, who gained her title from her Austrian mother, was a Spanish woman whose marriage to her second cousin, the French king Louis XIII, made her queen of France. Engaged since her young childhood, Anne was fourteen when she married the French monarch. Her marriage proved to be strained—Anne and Louis frequently disagreed on matters of both court and state. When a war sparked between France and Spain in 1635, Anne conspired to illegally correspond with her brother, the Spanish king Philip IV. When this was discovered, the gulf between the

spouses grew even deeper. Both recognized the necessity of an heir to the throne, however, and in 1638, Anne gave birth to the eventual “Sun King” Louis XIV. Five years later, Anne’s husband died and she became queen regent, a position that granted Anne the control of the kingdom until her son came of age. During her reign, Anne fended off an attempted revolt of the aristocracy known as the Fronde. After her son formally ascended the throne in 1651, Anne entered a convent, where she spent her last years.



Christina of Sweden, 1626–1689

Appears on the *Teapot*
Labeled beneath portrait: Christine Reine de Suède.

William Faithorne the Elder (English, c. 1616–1691),
after Sébastien Bourdon (French, 1616–1671),
Christina, Queen of Sweden, 1653.
Engraving. National Portrait Gallery, London, D22699

One of Europe’s most learned and memorably eccentric rulers was Christina of Sweden. Shirking her era’s gender norms in both her clothing and her manner, Christina was known as an assertive, deeply intellectual woman. She maintained a correspondence with the philosopher René Descartes and was known to spend up to ten hours a day studying. As queen, Christina was instrumental in negotiating the Peace of Westphalia, ending the European wars of religion. Though she was under intense

pressure to produce an heir, Christina was determined to remain unmarried. Her close relationship with Ebba Sparre, her lady-in-waiting, has led some to consider the possibility that Christina was a lesbian. Her decision never to marry was ultimately part of her choice to end her reign. After ten years ruling Sweden, Christina abdicated the throne to her cousin, subsequently converting to Catholicism and moving to Rome.



Elizabeth I, 1533–1603

Appears on the *Sugar Bowl*
Labeled beneath portrait: ELISABETH D'ANGLETERRE

Michel-Guillaume Aubert (English, c. 1704–1757),
Elizabeth I, date unknown. Engraving

Elizabeth I was the queen of England during a period of profound cultural productivity—the time of writers like William Shakespeare, Edmund Spenser, and Christopher Marlowe. A daughter of Henry VIII and his second wife, Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth is one of Europe’s most well-known historical monarchs, overseeing the defeat of Spain’s famously powerful naval fleet. Though she entertained marriage at

several points during her long reign, she remained single and childless until her death, garnering her the appellation of the “virgin queen.” This became a central aspect of her carefully curated public image. Through ceremonies and images, Elizabeth fostered the development of a cult of personality that lent a charmed quality to her reign—a quality that persists to this day in the idea of an Elizabethan “golden age.”



Mary, Queen of Scots, 1542–1587

Appears on the *Sugar Bowl*
Labeled beneath portrait: MARIE STUARD.

Léonard Gaultier (French, c. 1561–1630/41),
Mary, Queen of Scots, after 1587. Engraving.
National Portrait Gallery, London, D42632

Mary, Queen of Scots led one of the most dramatic public lives of the sixteenth century. She ascended to the throne of Scotland at just a few days old, after the death of her father, King James V of Scotland. She married several times. First, when she was seventeen, she married the dauphin of France, who died a year later. Then, she married her cousin, Henry Stewart, who was later murdered under mysterious circumstances. Soon after, she married James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell, an unpopular move that led to her imprisonment in Scotland. She escaped and fled,

alone, to England, seeking the protection of Elizabeth I. Her relationship with Elizabeth was tense, however, and after a set of likely forged documents were shown to the court implicating Mary in her second husband’s murder, Elizabeth imprisoned her. Remaining in captivity until the end of her life, Mary attempted to secure her freedom by participating in a plot to assassinate Elizabeth, for which she was ultimately beheaded.



Marie de Rabutin-Chantal, Madame de Sévigné, 1626–1696

Appears on a *Cup*
Labeled beneath portrait: M^{DE} DE SEVIGNÉ.

Nicolas Etienne Edelinck (French, 1681–1767),
after Robert Nanteuil (French, 1623–1678),
Marie de Rabutin-Chantal, Madame de Sévigné,
1696–before 1767. Engraving. British Museum, R.6.173

Eighteenth-century French readers gained a glimpse into the life of one of the most sparkling wits of the the 1600s when Marie de Rabutin-Chantal’s letters to her daughter were published in 1725. Rabutin-Chantal became known as Madame de Sévigné when she married the Marquis of Sévigné at age eighteen. After seven years of marriage, he was killed in a duel over the affections of a widely-admired beauty named Charlotte de Gondran. At this point, De Sévigne’s focus shifted

entirely to her children, to whom she remained extremely close until her death. Her extensive letters to her daughter—she was known to write twenty pages a day at certain periods—managed to impart anecdotes of court life, pieces of motherly advice, and commentary on contemporary philosophical and theological disputes with humor and beauty. Her work remains among the most valuable and detailed documents describing seventeenth-century French aristocratic life.



Françoise-Marguerite de Sévigné, 1646–1705

Appears on a *Cup*
Labeled beneath portrait: M^{DE} DE GRIGNAN.

Sébastien Pinssio (French, 1721–active 1755),
after Ferdinand (life dates unknown),
Françoise-Marguerite de Sévigné, 1778–86.
Engraving. National Portrait Gallery, London, D23820

Nearly all the famous letters of Madame de Sévigné were written to her daughter, Françoise-Marguerite, Comtesse de Grignan. Françoise-Marguerite spent her youth at the court of Louis XIV, where she was remembered for her graceful performances in ballets put on by the courtiers. At the age of twenty-three she was married to François Adhémar de Monteil, Comte de Grignan, after which she moved to Provence. This move is what prompted her mother to begin the

correspondence that lent both figures fame. Her mother’s wit and love, translated into letters, helped Françoise-Marguerite live through what proved to be an extremely difficult marriage, as her husband revealed himself to be an inveterate gambler, spender, and philanderer—ultimately giving her and, by extension, their children, the syphilis that slowly compromised their health.



Hortense Mancini, 1646–1699

Appears on a *Cup*
Labeled beneath portrait: HORTENSE MANCINI.

Gerard Valck (Dutch, 1652–1726),
after Peter Lely (Dutch, 1618–1680),
Hortense Mancini, Duchess of Mazarin, 1678.
Engraving. National Portrait Gallery, London, D10769

The first autobiography by a French woman to be published during the author’s lifetime under her own name was written by Hortense Mancini, a noblewoman famed for her wit and steadfast self-determination. After a charmed childhood at the court of Louis XIV, Hortense married Armand Charles de la Porte de la Meilleraye, one of the richest men in Europe, who proved to be abusive. After seven years with him, Hortense fled the marriage, absconding in the middle of the night dressed as a man to

avoid detection. Seeking shelter in her sister’s Venetian home, Hortense quickly reentered society, becoming a famed hostess of lavish, cosmopolitan parties. Ultimately, she moved to England, where she lived until her death, dodging legal attacks from her husband while managing a number of controversial romantic relationships, including one with King Charles II of England, Scotland, and Ireland.



Antoinette du Ligier de la Garde Deshoulières, 1638–1694

Appears on a *Cup*
Labeled beneath portrait: M^{DE} DESHOULIERES

Georg Friedrich Schmidt (German, 1712–1775),
after Elisabeth Sophie Chéron (French, 1648–1711),
Antoinette de Ligier de la Garde, Deshoulières, 1737–39.
Engraving. British Museum, 1838,1215.57

An erudite poet whose philosophically complex works influenced Enlightenment thinking, Antoinette du Ligier de la Garde Deshoulières was deeply admired among French readers when this tea service was painted. Born into the French aristocracy, Antoinette received an intense education, studying contemporary philosophy alongside Spanish, Italian, and Latin. At the age thirteen, she was married to a military officer who, a few years later and under great financial strain, arranged a legal

separation that left Antoinette relatively destitute and seemingly without options. She soon founded a salon at her home, however, that established her as a center of culture and exciting thought. She published poetry that elaborated on her ideas about philosophical naturalism, and found a wide readership—including Louis XIV, who ultimately acknowledged her contribution to French culture by endowing her with a significant yearly stipend.



Marie Angélique de Scorailles, 1661–1681

Appears on a *Cup*

Labeled beneath portrait: M^{ELLE} DE FONTANGE.

Nicolas de Larmessin (French, c. 1638–1694),
Marie Angélique de Scorailles, 1681.
Engraving. Bibliothèque nationale de France

The short but exciting life of Marie Angélique de Scorailles concluded at the court of Louis XIV. After a childhood at her family’s home in Auvergne, a region in central France, Marie was sent to Paris to join the court, where she quickly gained the attention of the king. At just seventeen years old, she became the king’s official royal mistress, or *maitresse-en-titre*, a role recognized by the court. Her newfound importance was celebrated through gifts and extravagant balls. Her

distinctive hairstyle, in which her face was framed by a pair of long ringlets extending to her shoulders, became the vogue—a fashion known as the *fontange*, a name taken from Marie’s official title of Duchess of Fontanges. Marie’s moment in the spotlight was short-lived, however. After surviving one stillbirth, the nineteen-year-old girl succumbed to complications faced in a second childbirth.



Anne Marie Martinozzi, 1637–1672

Appears on a *Cup*

Labeled beneath portrait: ANNE MARTINOZI P^{ESSE} DE CONTI.

Nicolas Regnesson (French, 1620/25–1670),
after Beaubrun (life dates unknown),
Anne Marie Martinozzi, Duchess of Conti, c. 1650–70.
Engraving. Royal Collection Trust, 615549

Along with her cousin Hortense Mancini, Anne Marie Martinozzi, identified in this tea service as Princess de Conti, was brought from Italy to the French royal court at a young age. Her uncle, the Cardinal Mazarin, was an advisor to the French queen Anne of Austria. Anne Marie received the honor of being the queen’s chief personal assistant, or lady-in-waiting. This role granted her intimate access to the workings of power. Anne Marie’s uncle arranged for her to marry Armand de Bourbon, Prince of

Conti, which was seen as a very good match as de Bourbon was a member of the French royal lineage. Both Anne Marie and her husband became interested in religious mysticism, spending much of their time studying Christian scripture. Because of her religious knowledge, Anne Marie served as a godmother to Louis, the dauphin of France and eldest son of Louis XIV.



Anna Scott, 1651–1732

Appears on a *Cup*

Labeled beneath portrait: LA DUCHESSE DE MONTMOUTH.

Jan van der Vaart (Dutch, c. 1653–1727),
after Godfrey Kneller (English, 1646–1723),
Anna Scott, Duchess of Monmouth, 1678–79.
Mezzotint. National Portrait Gallery, London, D10988

Anna Scott, Duchess of Monmouth, was a woman whose magnificent inheritance made her among the most attractive matches in Scotland during the seventeenth century. At the age of twelve, she was married to the fourteen-year-old James Crofts, a son of Charles II, the king of Scotland. James was serially unfaithful, and though the couple produced six children, their marriage proved cool and detached. This distance worked in Anna’s favor when her husband attempted to spark a revolt

against the government in 1685. Before James’s execution, Anna convinced him to admit that she was unaware of his plot. The lack of knowledge of her husband’s wrongdoings saved her inheritance, which could have been put in legal jeopardy. After a widowhood of three years, Anna married Charles Cornwallis, with whom she shared a much happier marriage.



Possibly Elizabeth Charlotte of Bavaria, Princess Palatine, 1652–1722

Appears on a *Cup*

Labeled beneath portrait: LA PRINCESS PALATINE.

Wenceslaus Hollar (Bohemian, 1607–1677),
after Anthony van Dyck (Flemish, 1599–1641),
Frances Stuart, Countess of Portland, 1650.
Engraving. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 17.21.25

This portrait reveals the complexity of producing work in collaboration with a porcelain factory. The image that Marie-Victoire Jaquotot used to produce this painting was a portrait of Frances Stuart, a wealthy English woman known as the Countess of Portland. However, the image was first labeled by a gilder at the Sèvres factory “LA P^{ESSE} DE CONTI ANNE MARTINOZZI” in the band beneath the portrait. This mistake must have been realized, as Anne Martinozzi is pictured on a different cup in the

set (see above), and the portrait was relabeled in overwritten gilt letters “LA PRINCESS PALATINE,” possibly referring to Elizabeth Charlotte of Bavaria, who was sister-in-law to Louis XIV and famous for her lively correspondence. It is impossible to explain the discrepancy between the portrait source and the title on the cup, but the circumstance points to the difficulty inherent not only in producing a set like this cabaret, but also in selecting and arranging the series of women who would adorn it.